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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
6 October 1965

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Upheaval in IndonesiaSUMMARY

The Indonesian army, having countered what appears to have been a leftist coup on 1 October, is for the time being firmly in control of Indonesia. It would like to use the opportunity to take strong steps against the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and elements allied with it. It would be reluctant to take decisive action, however, without the approval of President Sukarno. Sukarno, in the interest of national unity and probably fearing the ascendancy of the army, has asserted that the present situation is a political problem that requires a political settlement and that he wishes to settle it himself. He apparently hopes to conciliate the leftists and return the Communist Party to the favorable political position it enjoyed prior to the events of 1 October.

State Department review completed

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1. Early on 1 October a group which called itself the "30 September Movement" kidnapped six army generals, including Army Commander Yani, and later murdered them. The movement was led by Lt. Col. Untung, a battalion commander in President Sukarno's bodyguard, the Tjakrabirawa regiment. In addition to Untung's own battalion (which was one of three in the regiment), the movement also appears to have included some elements of the air force and initially was openly supported by the Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani. Also reportedly involved were Communist-influenced army elements from Central Java and members of Pemuda Rakjat--the Communist youth organization, the party's special security force, and GERWANI--the Communist women's front group.

2. A message read over the Djakarta radio on the morning of 1 October claimed that Untung's action was "supported by troops of other branches of the armed forces" and that the "30 September Movement" had acted to forestall an American-inspired "generals' coup." The message stated that President Sukarno and other targets of the "generals' coup" were under the protection of the movement. Shortly thereafter the 45 members of a leftist "Revolutionary Council" were announced. About half of the council's membership was composed of government officials, a few of whom were high-level and none of whom at that time was maintaining an anti- or even strong non-Communist position. The council contained three members of the Indonesian Communist Party Central Committee. The rest were well-known fellow travellers or crypto-Communists.

3.

Radio Indonesia announced that the army controlled the situation, that the police had also joined the army and navy to crush the "counterrevolutionary movement," and that President Sukarno and Defense Minister

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General Nasution--the latter had been a target of Untung's group--were safe.

4. During the night of 1 October, Lt. Col. Untung apparently fled to Central Java where he apparently hoped to establish a position with pro-Communist elements in that province. Repeated broadcasts of President Sukarno's appeal for restoration of order and the strong pro-Sukarno, pro-army stance of both General Sabur--Untung's superior officer in the Tjakrabirawa regiment--and of General Surjosumpeno--army commander in Central Java--appear to have cut away much of Untung's following. Reports are confused, however, as to his present support. They range from a mere 110 troops to several battalions. There are no present plans to send additional troops into Central Java to deal with him; loyal troops already stationed in that province are deemed sufficient to cope with the situation.

5. On 4 October Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani, who had already been absolved of complicity in the "30 September Movement" by Sukarno, by implication denied any connection with the movement. In a special broadcast he thanked Sukarno "for trust in the air force" and said appropriate action would be taken against any air force personnel involved in the movement.

6. Meanwhile President Sukarno had been maneuvering to reaffirm his own control of the situation. On 2 October he summoned all military commanders and Second Deputy Prime Minister Leimena to a meeting "to settle the 30 September incident immediately." (First Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio was in North Sumatra but has since returned and is with Sukarno in Bogor; Third Deputy Prime Minister Chaerul Saleh is en route home from Communist China.) Sukarno subsequently broadcast to the nation that he had assumed personal command of the army, that he had appointed General Pranoto, an army headquarters staff officer, administrative head of the army and had deputed General Suharto "to implement the restoration of security." A statement by Suharto which followed that of Sukarno affirmed the changes made by the president. A 3 October

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broadcast by the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) described Pranoto only as "assisting the president."

7. Suharto, long regarded as apolitical and possibly an opportunist, emerges in the present situation as a strong military leader and apparently a firm anti-Communist. Pranoto, on the other hand, does not belong to the group of officers who looked to Yani and Nasution for leadership and obviously is viewed with some disfavor by Suharto and his colleagues. Sukarno is said to have elevated Pranoto during the present crisis as a means of conciliating and protecting the left, and it would seem that he also did it as a means of imposing disunity upon the army. Appraisals of Pranoto range from passive and soft on the Communists to actively pro-Communist. He has served in Central Java, a Communist stronghold, as a battalion commander and later as the territorial commander; he is reputed during those years to have done nothing to obstruct Communist growth there.

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8. The US Embassy in Djakarta has a confirmed report that Sukarno's palace guards and air force troops are protecting Sukarno and Dani in Bogor. Reportedly, Suharto's troops have their guns trained toward the palace. The US Embassy now believes that Suharto's forces are allowed access to Sukarno for bargaining and tape recording Sukarno's statements but they do not control him.

9. Sukarno has rejected army suggestions for firm measures against leaders of the "30 September Movement" and the Communist Party. On 4 October he told the army generals that the situation basically involves political issues, that tranquillity and order are needed for a solution, and that the generals should "leave the political settlement to me." Army officers, initially jubilant at the prospect of cracking down on the Communists, were reported depressed after their meetings with Sukarno.

10. Apparently a few hours prior to this 4 October meeting between Sukarno and the generals and apparently also under the emotion of having just viewed

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the exhuming of the murdered generals, Suharto made an unusual public statement which strongly implied both doubt and criticism of the president and accused the air force and the Communists of complicity in the "30 September Movement." He stated that the bodies had been found in a well within the jurisdiction of the Halim Air Force Base near Djakarta. He said that an area near the well had been used as an air force training center for volunteers from Pemuda Rakjat (the Communist youth organization) and GERWANI (the Communist women's organization). He went on that "based on these facts, it is possible that there is truth in the statement of our beloved father, President, Supreme Commander, Great Leader of the Revolution, that the air force is not involved in the affair. But it is impossible that there is no connection with this affair among elements of the air force." Suharto said he conveyed the sentiments of "patriots who are members of the army" that "air force patriots will purge such members (of the air force) who are involved in this adventure."

11. A few hours later, General Sabur in his capacity as Secretary General of the Supreme Operations Command (KOTI) broadcast an account of Sukarno's 4 October admonitions to the generals, combat commanders, and all commanders of the armed services. According to Sabur, Sukarno had ordered those present, and inferentially all Indonesians, not to permit themselves to be "set off against each other" since this would "harm our struggle and weaken our potential." Sabur said settlement of the 30 September incident would be handled personally and soon by the president. He quoted Sukarno as warning military leaders "not to fall into the trap of (garble--probably imperialist or neocolonialist) tactics in view of their latest activities for weakening us from inside as a prelude for their attacks against us." He specifically ordered combat commanders to "realize the danger of intrigue of our adversaries," to "remain vigilant and continuously enhance unity." Sukarno did manage to say that those who fell victim to the "30 September Movement" were heroes of the revolution, and he invited prayer for their souls.

12. The Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), after indicating its support of the "30 September

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Movement" through its official newspaper Harian Rakjat, has now largely lapsed into silence. Communist Party leaders apparently are in seclusion or actual hiding.

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13. The leftist press in Medan, North Sumatra, has continued to publish, and probably is setting the line the party plans to take when its leaders emerge again. The pro-party press in Medan expresses a hope for increased solidarity between the army and the people "particularly in settling the 30 September affair strictly along lines set out by President Sukarno."

14. Many questions remain unanswered about the "30 September Movement." Most revolve around Sukarno. Did Sukarno have prior knowledge of the "30 September Movement" and its intentions? Was he taken into protective custody by members of the movement or did he, as he publicly announced, visit Halim Air Force Base--the headquarters of Air Force Chief of Staff Dani and probably the headquarters of the 30 September group--of his own will on 1 October because he thought it wise to be near an airplane? Or was his presence there an indication that he, like the air force and the Communist Party, openly and briefly endorsed the movement?

Did Sukarno's appearance of illness during an address on the evening of 30 September motivate the events of 1 October--events which seem to have been previously but perhaps incompletely planned?

15. Other questions pertain to Lt. Col. Untung and Communist Party leaders.

he is a strict Moslem who was outraged by the high living and corrupt practices of high-ranking army officers. If he was only a tool and a front man--and this seems plausible--who did the actual planning? Or did several plans by various elements become entangled, with one being used to justify another?

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18. Despite Harian Rakjat's brief espousal of the movement it does not seem likely that party chairman Aidit would have approved the murder of the generals or even the change of government. The Indonesian situation, both foreign and domestic, was highly favorable to the Communists and--barring Sukarno's immediate death--showed every sign of becoming progressively more so.

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The motivation of Air Force Chief of Staff Marshal Dani remains an open question. He has assumed an increasingly leftist position during the past year.

19. With the army's counteraction and Sukarno's subsequent moves, many of the questions pertaining to the promotion of the "30 September Movement" become almost academic. The principal point now is whether the army will go along with Sukarno in papering over the situation and returning to the political status quo prior to the events of 1 October.

20. The previous record of the army seems to indicate, that despite frustration and rage over the murders of six highly regarded generals, most officers will continue to support Sukarno. Although there is considerable individual and collective doubt among the officer corps as to the wisdom of Sukarno's policies, there is also enormous reluctance to oppose him. Sukarno has so presented his position that any specific action against the Communists would be considered an anti-Sukarno act. It now appears that only if Untung can develop a following in Central Java and renew armed action--and at the moment this does not appear to be a strong possibility--would Sukarno tolerate a significant move against him and his allies.

21. In the aftermath of the "30 September Movement," however, the army temporarily will retain a political ascendancy. This is based in the martial law still obtaining in Djakarta, in the army's physical control of most of the country, and in the present policy of seclusion being followed by Communist leaders.

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22. Should Sukarno move too rapidly in favor of the left during this period, he could cause a sharpening of feeling between himself and most army leaders. This could promote a stronger public and political anti-Communist stand by the army than it has maintained in the past year and weaken the political position of the party. Such a development, however, is highly speculative.

23. Sukarno's health continues to be a major factor in determining the course of events. The army is far more likely to act decisively if the president dies or is disabled than if he remains reasonably vigorous. Sukarno's continued seclusion is not necessarily an indication that his health has further deteriorated; he will probably defer a public appearance until he feels that it is to his political advantage. Meanwhile he apparently is holding frequent meetings with various military and civilian officials.

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THE UPHEAVAL IN INDONESIA

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

Office of Current Intelligence

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